



Mariya GABRIEL

*Commissioner for Innovation, Research,
Culture, Education and Youth*

7 October 2020

GREETING STATEMENT

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to congratulate all the partners of the consortium within EUDIGIT (European Digital Citizens) project, co-funded by Europe for Citizens Programme, with the official launch of their partnership – the coordinator *City of Marseille (France)* and the partners *Municipality of Rotterdam (Netherlands)*, *Municipality of Genoa (Italy)*, *Municipality of Varna (Bulgaria)*, *City of Hamburg (Germany)*, *Cluj-Napoca Metropolitan Area (Romania)* and *Evro Advans Association (Bulgaria)*, represented by *TheMayor.EU*.

The facts are alarming: more than one in five young people fail to reach a basic level of digital skills across the EU. The EUDIGIT aims at reducing the digital gap in cities through co-building digital policies with citizens. It explores how cities can become actively involved in reducing the digital divide via policies and an evolution of public services tailored 'with and for all citizens'. I am glad that this is a real innovative approach in designing and carrying out the project activities. I believe that the project will achieve its envisaged outcomes of targeting directly 520 people in co-creation of policies addressing digital divide. It is important also to further build on its results and complement them with other initiatives to maximize its impact.



Digital and innovation divide need to be addressed in a holistic way through the three components of the knowledge triangle – education, research and innovation. On 30 September, I presented the initiatives of building a true European Education Area, a new Digital Education Action Plan and a revitalised European Research Area. They will be implemented jointly, in synergy, through a number of key actions, for instance - to bring researchers to schools, promote the European Universities Initiative, provide access to education to pupils from disadvantaged groups, establish 50 vocational centres of excellence, develop comprehensive strategy towards true gender equality in the knowledge sectors, etc. Moreover, the new Digital Education Action Plan will foster a high performing digital education ecosystem and enhance digital skills and competences. Through mobilising funding under Erasmus+ Programme, Horizon Europe Programme and other EU Funds you will be able to scale up the activities under EUDIGIT project for the benefit of your citizens and present the project like a best practice to be followed by other cities in Europe.

As the first EU Commissioner in charge of the three elements of the knowledge triangle – education, research and innovation, I am committed to work with innovative cities like the ones in your consortium, to ensure that the digital and innovation divides are reduced for the development of a well-integrated innovation ecosystem in Europe.

Wishing you successful partnership and project implementation,

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mariya Gabriel', with a horizontal line underneath.

Mariya Gabriel

Commissioner for Innovation, Research,

Culture, Education and Youth